

Face Check

Coaching Self-Awareness in Early Childhood Settings



Ben Springer, Ph.D.
Early Childhood Conference 2012
Utah State Office of Education



What is this kid feeling?

Remarkably, most of you think this kid is feeling sad, alone, left-out, or rejected.

How did you come to that conclusion?

We know that your brain worked faster than lightning to evaluate specific cues and apply them to your own learned experiences almost effortlessly. In fact, you did it so effortlessly, you had time to think about a time you may have felt that way or someone you know felt that way.

Pretty amazing.

For the purposes of our early childhood settings, you're going to teach our little kiddos how to do this in a game called Face Check.

Why teach “Face Check?”

1. “Face Check” is a basic Self-Awareness strategy designed to optimize “in the moment” teaching. As students become more self-aware, they can begin identifying emotions in themselves and other people.
2. It’s fun. It’s inexpensive.
3. You’re basically reinforcing a target behavior at a high rate. The target behavior is emotion recognition (in self and others).

By teaching your students “Face Check,” you will be teaching an important foundational skill of self-awareness and self-control.

Materials:

Emotion Cards (Included)

Data Sheets (Included)

Beep Tape (visit: <http://www.updc.org/beep/>)

Student selected rewards/incentives

Here’s how to do it:

Step One: Assess student ability with “emotion cards.” (Some cartoon cards are included here for your use. Feel free to replicate these cards with real students in your real class. Ask them to copy the “emotion card” faces and take their picture). Take data on how accurate your students are at recognizing emotions (i.e., 8/10, 7/10, etc.). 80% accuracy and above may be considered a great starting point for Step Two. If you’re getting less than 80% accuracy, feel free to continue to teach emotion recognition until 80% accuracy or above is achieved.

Step Two: If you've collected 80% accuracy or above, you can start to teach the "Face Check" game.

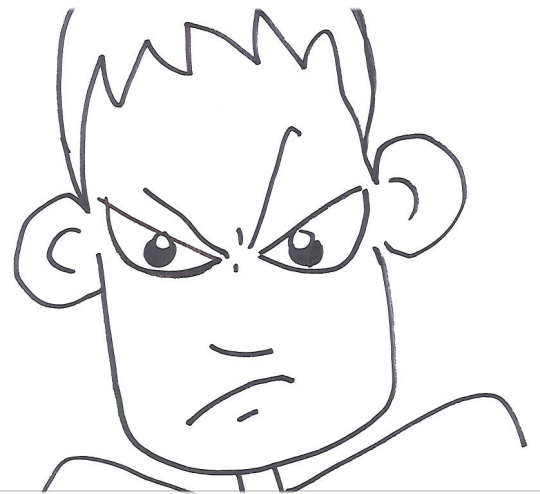
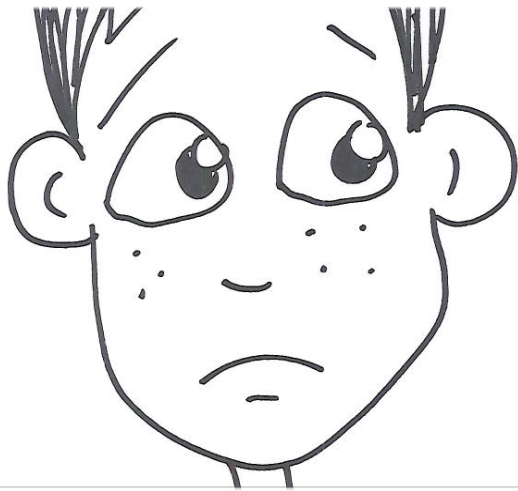
- Have kids gather around and tell them you have a cool game. Tell them that the game is called "Face Check"
- Say: "When we start our next activity (i.e., free choice, free play, etc.) you are going to hear a 'beep.' When you hear the beep, that means you 'Face Check!' Face Check means you look at a friend's face and see what their feeling. Then you check your own face. How are you feeling.? I will come by and give you a (highly incentivizing reward of their choice) when I catch you doing a 'Face Check.'"

Step Three: Engage the "I do, we do, you do" teaching cycle.

- Cue the beep tape. When it beeps act out "face check" by yourself. Animate all of your actions! (Ham it up!) Say: "Oh! I just heard a beep! That means "face check!" Okay, look at a friend (look at a child and identify their facial expression). Okay, now I think about what MY face is doing (I'm happy!) Good. I did it! I get a treat! (Give yourself a treat).
- Now we're all going to try it! I'm going to watch. (Cue Beep Tape). When it beeps, say "face check!" Prompt students to find a peer and identify their facial expression. Prompt students to find their own facial expression.
- Okay now you try it. Let's go to the (activity, free choice, free play, etc). When you hear the beep, I want you to "face check!" If I catch you "face checking," you'll get a treat!
- Initiate beep tape. Reward and assist as needed.

Data Sheet

Name & Date	Face Check Other?	Emotion Identified	Face Check Self?	Emotion Identified
<i>Johnny S.</i> <i>9/12/12</i>	Yes	<i>Happy</i>	Yes	<i>Bored</i>
	No		No	
	Yes		Yes	
	No		No	
	Yes		Yes	
	No		No	
	Yes		Yes	
	No		No	
	Yes		Yes	
	No		No	
	Yes		Yes	
	No		No	
	Yes		Yes	
	No		No	
	Yes		Yes	
	No		No	
	Yes		Yes	
	No		No	



It would be a good idea to take digital photos of your students, or perhaps other meaningful faces in the child's environment. Simply label them and teach them!